



LOWELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Henry J. Mroz Administration Office
155 Merrimack Street
Lowell, Massachusetts 01852

William J. Samaras
Mayor and Chairperson

Jackie Doherty
Vice-Chairperson

Andre P. Descoteaux
Robert J. Hoey Jr.
Dominik Hok Lay
Connie A. Martin
Gerard Nutter

Community Partnership
Subcommittee Meeting

Wednesday, September 4, 2019
City Hall Council Chambers
5:30 p.m.

Tel: (978) 674-4324

Fax: (978) 937-7609

Subcommittee Members Present:

Chairperson Andy Descoteaux, Dominik Hok Lay
and Connie Martin

School Committee Members Present:

Jackie Doherty, Robert Hoey and Gerry Nutter

School Department Personnel Present:

Latifah Phillips, Chief Equity &Engagement
Officer

Chairperson Descoteaux called the meeting to order at 5:39 p.m. The following agenda item was discussed:

1. Community Outreach Strategist Role and Tasks

Chairperson Descoteaux asked Ms. Phillips, Chief Equity & Engagement Officer to speak to the Committee about the Community Outreach Strategist position. Ms. Phillips had a PowerPoint presentation that she shared with the Subcommittee and spoke about setting the stage for long term improvement and the role of the Community Outreach Strategist. Ms. Phillips stated that this is a critical new position in this division and she wants to use this position to empower families to understand school and district goals. She spoke about the district's core beliefs and stated that we need to share them with the community. She spoke about eliminating the racial, ethnic and linguistic achievement and opportunity gaps among all students and what we need to do to achieve this. She stated that we need to understand the needs of our families and how the district needs to provide equitable funding and resources among the district's diverse schools and that we need to engage our families with courtesy, dignity, respect and cultural understanding. She stated that we need to leverage our communication tools so we are not constantly just reacting. She said that her time spent in the Family Resource Center has shown

her a lot and she wants to firmly define family engagement and believes it's most effective when engagement is early and ongoing and not just in response to crises. She stated that community outreach and communications considerations are very important and effective and need to be ongoing. She stated that she believes that two-way communication is at the heart of successful schools that helps students succeed. She stated that she thinks Lowell is an amazing community to be in and she's glad that she found her way here and by getting more information out she's hoping to get more people to our community.

She then spoke about the job description and stated that she is looking for a specific candidate who has a bachelor's degree in journalism, communication, media, education, public relations or other related fields. She stated that the district will be using district and school websites, mobile apps, notifications and alerts, email, social media, video and non-digital channels to communicate and the types of communication that will be addressed are as follows:

- Promotion of school happenings and news,
- Time critical school information,
- School Site Council meetings and events relating to education improvements,
- Stories and imagery of the school's impact on the community,
- School marketing and branding to support school enrollment process and staff recruitment and retention.

Mr. Lay asked about the job description and when we plan on bringing this person on board and has it been posted?

Ms. Phillips responded that it has not been posted because the administration wanted to hear from the Committee their thoughts around the position and what type of person they were looking for.

Ms. Martin asked about the salary.

Ms. Philips stated \$70,000 to \$80,000.

Ms. Martin stated that she agrees that we have been reactive and being more proactive than reactive is great. One of the key things she stated that she'd like to see built into the position is that the person should be trained in all of our schools and that the individual has the expertise to train the trainer. She stated that she believes that the communications side in this position is very strong and she would like to see the parent engagement piece be looked at a little more, because she believes transforming a parent's perspective can have a profound effect on a child's education.

Mr. Descoteaux stated that people would be shocked when they find out all the things that the Lowell Public Schools offers and he agrees that looking at the School Site Council and making sure that parents know we want them at our events and involved in our schools. He also stated that he believes maintaining all school events on the main calendar on the Lowell Public School website is very helpful for parents.

Ms. Phillips stated that partnerships with the schools are a big part of this and a way to enhance school communications.

Mr. Hoey stated that he thought the presentation was awesome and the block party was great and believes we are off to a good start.

Mr. Lay stated that communication to 8th graders about choosing a high school is very important, because some students and parents don't really understand the difference between the vocational high school and Lowell High School and he believes we need to find a way to educate the parents.

Ms. Martin made a motion to recommend to the full Committee to move forward and post the Community Outreach Strategist position; seconded by Mr. Lay. 3 yeas APPROVED

Ms. Martin made a motion to accept the report as a report of progress; seconded by Mr. Lay. 3 yeas APPROVED

Ms. Martin made a motion to adjourn at 6:13 p.m.; seconded by Mr. Lay. 3 yeas APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Latifah Phillips
Chief Equity & Engagement Officer

LP/mes